IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus having a vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ which has between a back wall ~~(18)~~ and at least one removable closing plate ~~(22)~~ a shield ~~(20)~~ with a flat cover ~~(10)~~, at least one guide roll ~~(12, 13, 14, 15)~~ and a coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ with an axis (A) as well as at least one coating source ~~(39a, 39b, 39c)~~ being disposed in the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the ends of the at least one guide roll ~~(12, 13, 14, 15)~~ and of the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ which face the closing plate ~~(22)~~ are fastened to the cover ~~(10)~~ with bearings, and that the space in the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ underneath the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ is kept free of supporting elements.

2. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one guide roll ~~(12. 13. 14. 15)~~ and the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ are journaled on the back wall ~~(18)~~ by their ends remote from the closing plate ~~(22)~~.

3. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one guide roll ~~(12. 13. 14. 15)~~ and the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ are journaled at their ends remote from the closing plate ~~(22)~~ on supporting elements in front of the back wall ~~(18)~~ and are held on the cover ~~(10)~~.

4. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the space underneath and laterally of the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ is divided by dividing walls ~~(6)~~ into at least two sub-chambers ~~(3, 4, 5)~~ and that the dividing walls ~~(6)~~ have at their ends facing the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ sealing means ~~(7)~~ whose curvature is adapted to the radius of the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ such that between the sealing elements ~~(7)~~ and the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ arcuate sealing means ~~(7)~~ whose curvature is adapted to the radius of the

coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ such that between the sealing elements ~~(7)~~ and the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ arcuate sealing gaps are formed.

5. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the sealing means ~~(7)~~ are connected via actuating mechanisms ~~(8)~~ to the corresponding dividing wall ~~(6)~~ such that the sealing gaps can be adjusted radially to minimum values.

6. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~, within the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ at least four sub-chambers ~~(2, 3, 4, 5)~~ are formed on the circumference of the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ by dividing walls ~~(6)~~.

7. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the two uppermost dividing walls ~~(6)~~ enclose an angle between 120 and 180 degrees downward with respect to the axis (A).

8. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the partial circumference of the shield ~~(20)~~ lying underneath the two uppermost dividing walls ~~(6)~~ is of partially cylindrical configuration.

9. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 8, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a total of four guide rolls ~~(12, 13, 14, 15)~~ are arranged in the sub-chamber ~~(2)~~ lying above the two uppermost dividing walls ~~(6)~~.

10. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the dividing walls ~~(6)~~ have at their ends opposite from the back wall ~~(18)~~ radially running sealing bars ~~(23)~~ against which the closing plate ~~(22)~~ can be placed in contact.

11. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the sealing bars ~~(23)~~ have elastomeric sealing strips (23) running parallel to their radial center lines, against which the closing plate ~~(22)~~ can be brought in contact upon the closing of the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~.

12. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ has an end facing the closing plate ~~(22)~~ in front of which a fixed ring sector ~~(47)~~ is disposed, which partially encompasses the bottom end of the element ~~(19)~~ supporting the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~.

13. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ is surrounded at its ends within the sub-chambers ~~(3, 4, 5)~~ by strip-like masks ~~(52)~~ curved cylindrically coaxially, which extend around the said ends with tight clearance and shield the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ against the coating of their surface portions not covered by the web ~~(45)~~.

14. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the front mask ~~(52)~~ has an elastomeric sealing edge with which the closing plate ~~(22)~~ can be brought into engagement when the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ is closed.

15. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~claims 13 and 14, characterized in that~~ claim 13, wherein the ring sector ~~(47)~~ extends along the circumference to its end edges ~~(47a)~~ within the front mask ~~(52)~~.

16. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to 15, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the total height of the apparatus from the floor is no more than 2.5 meters.

17. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to 16, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ has on each side of the coating cylinder ~~(9)~~ a side chamber ~~(25, 26)~~ in which a winding mandrel ~~(27 and 28, respectively)~~, one for an unwinding roll ~~(44)~~ and one for a winding roll ~~(46)~~ as well as corresponding guide rolls ~~(29, 30 and 31, 32, respectively)~~ for the web ~~(45)~~.

18. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the side chambers ~~(25, 26)~~ are constituted as vacuum chambers and are joined to the sub-chamber ~~(2)~~ of the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ through slits ~~(33, 34)~~ for the passage of the web ~~(45)~~.

19. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein all sub-chambers ~~(2, 3,4, 5)~~ of the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~ and the side chambers ~~(25, 26)~~ are connect each to its own vacuum pump ~~(35)~~.

20. (currently amended) A web ~~Web~~ coating apparatus according to ~~at least one of claims 17 to 19, characterized in that~~ claim 17, wherein the upper sides of the side chambers ~~(25, 26)~~ lie at least substantially at the same level as the cover ~~(10)~~ of the vacuum chamber ~~(1)~~.

21. (new) Web coating apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the ring sector extends along the circumference to its end edges within the front mask.